



FOR RELEASE APRIL 2025

ECONOMIC IMPACT

2025 SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

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KEY DATA POINTS

At least 85,472 people attended the Sundance Film Festival between January 23rd and February 2nd, 2025, resulting in 130,710 tickets redeemed. Approximately 27,997 of the attendees were visitors from out of state. These out-of-state visitors spent an estimated \$162.4 million in Utah during the Festival. Sundance Institute also directly contributed to the Utah economy via the costs of planning and producing the 2025 Festival. In total, the Sundance Film Festival contributed the following to Utah's economy in 2025:

- \$196.1 million in Utah gross domestic product
- 2,697 jobs for Utah residents
- \$103.3 million in Utah wages
- \$21.1 million in state and local tax revenue

Additionally, Sundance Institute offered tickets to an online version of the Festival for attendees unable to travel to Utah. There were over 214,000 online views and associated ticket sales across 325 total online screenings.

BACKGROUND

The Sundance Film Festival is the flagship annual event of the non-profit Sundance Institute. The 2025 Festival ran for 11 days between January 23rd and February 2nd, 2025 and drew at least 85,472 attendees to 626 in-person film screenings in Park City and Salt Lake City, as well as panel discussions at both locations. About one-third of the attendees came from out of state. These out-of-state visitors contributed to Utah's economy by participating in Festival activities and purchasing lodging, meals, and entertainment during their stay. Sundance Institute also contributed directly to the local economy via direct spending on planning and producing Festival events. The 2025 Sundance Film Festival was available to participants through online-accessible films and events as well as the traditional in-person Festival. For the purposes of economic analysis, we assume those who participated in online-only events to have not contributed any more to Utah's economy outside of ticket sales.

This report estimates the total economic impact of the 2025 Sundance Film Festival using observational and self-reported survey data about Festival attendees, their attendance patterns, and their spending habits; and using Sundance Institute direct spending data. The report was sponsored by Sundance Institute.

There are additional sources of economic activity not accounted for in this report. We omit impacts due to spending by official Festival sponsors, unaffiliated businesses that operated around the event, airport taxes for attendees that traveled through Salt Lake International Airport, and secondary spending for visitors that return to the state post-Festival since these data sources were not made available to either Sundance Institute or to our research team.

METHODOLOGY

The estimates in this report rely on three categories of data: 1) film festival ticketing data for all Sundance Film Festival accountholders, 2) self-reported spending data collected through online surveys immediately after the Festival, and 3) accounting records from Sundance Institute about direct spending to produce the Festival. Using these data sources, we produced estimates for attendance and average spending for both in-state and out-of-state attendees.

ATTENDANCE ESTIMATES

For our attendance estimates, we rely on data collected by the Sundance Institute from Festival user accounts and ticket purchases as well as survey response data. Formerly, our attendance estimates were gathered from sensors that anonymously tracked individuals throughout an environment via their mobile devices. These sensors assigned each device a unique ID and the data reported where that device was seen at various Festival venues as measured by twenty sensors installed across the Festival footprint (including venues in Park City and Salt Lake City). Sensors were utilized again this year to monitor traffic beyond ticket checkpoints at Festival venues, however the sensors installed for this year's Festival were not able to uniquely identify the individuals they detected. As such, while this year's sensors provided a reasonable upper bound for attendance, they were not sufficient to derive a realistic, conservative estimate. This year's methodology therefore employed both the ticketing data acquired via Festival user accounts and the self-reported survey data.

SURVEY METHODS

Our research team conducted two surveys to determine spending among Festival attendees: 1) an online survey among ticket-buyers generally immediately after the Festival and 2) an online survey one week after the Festival among Festival pass-holders, which included industry professionals, VIPs, and other contributors to the Festival.

Y² Analytics fielded an online survey among Sundance Institute database ticket buyers shortly after the Festival. Ticket buyers were selected at random to participate and invited over email with one follow up reminder. In total, we interviewed 2,561 Festival attendees online. Additionally, we fielded the same online instrument among persons contained in a database of Festival pass-holders, with two follow-up reminders. These attendees included industry professionals, VIPs, and other Festival contributors. In total, we interviewed 50 of these Festival pass-holders.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Spending during the Sundance Film Festival generates many positive economic benefits. Tourism-related industries are beneficiaries of spending that would not otherwise be part of the state's economy, and that spending entering the state induces additional spending as companies hire additional labor, increase their capacity, and purchase the goods that are necessary to accommodate the additional visitors.

The detailed surveys conducted of Festival attendees provide data on how much attendees spend on a variety of services: lodging, meals, transportation, recreation, and other retail expenses. For each category of spending, we apply the latest available (2024) RIMS II economic multipliers produced by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

These multipliers capture how much additional spending is induced by the Festival. The RIMS II model also estimates the effect of the Festival on earnings in the state, and the number of jobs produced.

Sundance Institute spending that is necessary to sustain the Festival also contributes to the economic impact and its contribution to the total economic impact is also included.

The primary economic impact of spending coming from outside the state is referred to as *State Gross Domestic Product (State GDP)*. This is the *value-added* of all goods and services. It includes direct spending by visitors to the Festival, indirect spending, which is the value of inputs that are produced by other local businesses, and induced expenditures, which result from the increased spending by Utah households. State GDP removes the value of intermediate inputs and, thereby, captures new spending that occurs because of the Festival.

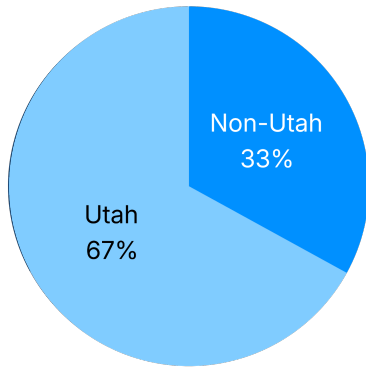
We also report a measure of *Total Output*. This measures the value of every dollar *associated* with spending on the Festival. However, Total Output includes intermediate goods and, therefore, contains some double-counting. We include this as a reference value but note that the true economic impact is captured best by the State GDP estimate.

Finally, using data from a number of sources, we develop estimates of state and local taxes (sales taxes and income taxes) that result from the increase in spending and earnings in the state.

RESULTS

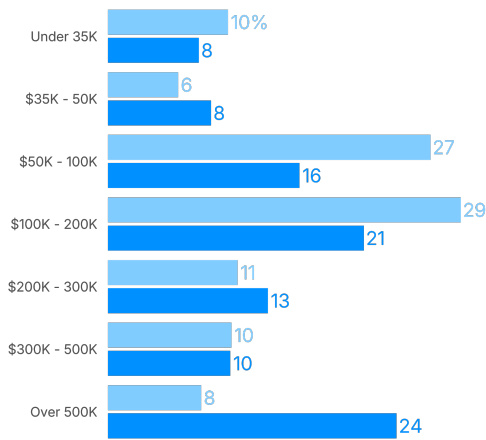
ATTENDEES: NUMBERS & CHARACTERISTICS

Figure 1: Proportion of Non-resident Attendees



About 85,472 attendees filled 130,710 seats at events over the course of the Festival. An estimated 67% of attendees were Utah residents (about 57,475 individuals) while 33% came from out-of-state (about 27,997 individuals). About 34% of non-residents came from California, 10% from New York, 7% from Texas, 5% from Illinois, 4% from Florida, 3% from Virginia, Washington, Pennsylvania, Colorado, and New Jersey, respectively, and 25% from other states. 3% of non-resident attendees traveled from outside the United States to attend the Festival, representing at least 20 different countries.

Figure 2: Attendee Income Ranges



89% of non-resident attendees reported attending multiple days of the Festival, with 61% of non-residents staying between 2 and 5 days. 82% of Utah residents attended only one or two days of events. A majority of Utah resident attendees came from Salt Lake County (55%), Summit County (21%), and Utah County (9%).

Out-of-state festival goers tended to come from relatively high-income households. 34% of non-resident respondents reported a household income of \$300,000 or more, a plurality of those visitors.

While a substantial share of those who traveled to attend the Festival are current entertainment industry professionals (25%), an even larger proportion are not. 5% of non-resident participants are students, about 2% are press, and 36% work in non-entertainment fields.

SPENDING

Table I below provides estimates of aggregate spending by both residents and non-residents of Utah. Utahns spent around \$39.8 million to participate in the Festival. This number is far exceeded, however, by the amount spent by non-residents. People coming to the state spent around \$162.4 million during their stay here, not including purchases of tickets to the Festival.

TABLE 1: AGGREGATE SPENDING

	UTAH	NON-UTAH	COMBINED
<i>Lodging</i>	\$-	\$64,930,582	\$64,930,582
<i>Car Rental</i>	\$408,518	\$3,144,974	\$3,553,492
<i>Other Transportation</i>	\$3,157,720	\$15,460,465	\$18,618,185
<i>Meals</i>	\$12,374,145	\$38,832,703	\$51,206,848
<i>Recreation & Entertainment</i>	\$20,274,183	\$33,400,221	\$53,674,404
<i>Other Spending</i>	\$3,535,806	\$6,587,293	\$10,123,100
<i>Total</i>	\$39,750,372	\$162,356,239	\$202,106,611

Tables 2 & 3 summarize spending on a per-person basis. Spending across all categories was \$6,422 for each out-of-state visitor or a total of \$925 per day. Utahns, primarily because they seldom need lodging, spent less but still purchased \$634 in goods, services, and recreation during the Festival, or \$206 per day.

TABLE 2: AVERAGE TOTAL SPENDING BY CATEGORY

	UTAH	NON-UTAH
<i>Lodging</i>	\$-	\$2,761
<i>Car Rental</i>	\$6	\$103
<i>Other Transportation</i>	\$44	\$612
<i>Meals</i>	\$207	\$1,378
<i>Recreation & Entertainment</i>	\$327	\$1,315
<i>Other Spending</i>	\$49	\$252
<i>Total</i>	\$634	\$6,422

TABLE 3: AVERAGE DAILY SPENDING BY CATEGORY

	UTAH	NON-UTAH
<i>Lodging</i>	\$-	\$404
<i>Car Rental</i>	\$3	\$18
<i>Other Transportation</i>	\$16	\$77
<i>Meals</i>	\$70	\$185
<i>Recreation & Entertainment</i>	\$105	\$196
<i>Other Spending</i>	\$13	\$45
<i>Total</i>	\$206	\$925

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The spending by non-residents and by Sundance Institute contribute economically to the state. Table 4 summarizes the economic impact of this spending. We estimate that the economic impact of the Festival (State GDP) is roughly \$196.1 million. Most of this is due to spending brought in by visitors to the state. The total amount of economic activity associated with the Festival is roughly \$342.9 million, though we caution again that this value contains significant double-counting for some types of expenditures. Nonetheless, the Festival has a sizeable impact on the state economy.

TABLE 4: ECONOMIC IMPACTS

	NON-RESIDENT	SUNDANCE INSTITUTE	COMBINED
<i>Total Spending</i>	\$162,356,239	\$11,166,074	\$173,522,313
<i>Economic Impact (State GDP)</i>	\$186,057,094	\$10,020,970	\$196,078,064
<i>Total Output</i>	\$325,640,159	\$17,521,197	\$342,891,356
<i>Earnings</i>	\$98,230,650	\$5,092,336	\$103,322,985
<i>State and Local Taxes</i>	\$20,875,118	\$261,117	\$21,136,235
<i>Jobs</i>	2,587	110	2,697

The Festival has other economic impacts. We estimate that the annual employment associated with the Festival is 2,697 jobs and total earnings of those employees is over \$103.3 million. Additionally, we estimate that the Festival generates roughly \$21.1 million in state and local taxes. These are revenues that would not be available to the state without the Festival.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ATTENDEE RESIDENCE

	TOTAL
<i>Utah</i>	67.24%
<i>Non-Utah</i>	32.76%

APPENDIX B: ATTENDEE AGE

	UTAH	NON-UTAH	TOTAL
<i>Under 18</i>	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%
<i>18-25</i>	9.1%	5.5%	7.9%
<i>26-35</i>	22.9%	15.2%	20.4%
<i>36-45</i>	15.5%	15.5%	15.5%
<i>46-55</i>	13.0%	18.9%	15.0%
<i>56-64</i>	20.1%	26.2%	22.1%
<i>Over 65</i>	19.3%	18.3%	19.0%

APPENDIX C: ATTENDEE GENDER

	UTAH	NON-UTAH	TOTAL
<i>Woman</i>	69.4%	63.1%	67.4%
<i>Man</i>	24.3%	31.5%	26.6%
<i>Other</i>	6.3%	5.4%	6.0%

APPENDIX D: ATTENDEE EDUCATION

	UTAH	NON-UTAH	TOTAL
<i>High School Graduate or Less</i>	2.7%	1.0%	2.2%
<i>Some College</i>	10.7%	6.3%	9.3%
<i>Associates or Technical Degree</i>	4.0%	8.7%	5.5%
<i>Bachelor's Degree</i>	40.0%	45.1%	41.7%
<i>Master's Degree</i>	29.9%	26.7%	28.9%
<i>Doctorate/Other Post-Grad</i>	12.7%	12.2%	12.5%

APPENDIX E: ATTENDEE INCOME

	UTAH	NON-UTAH	TOTAL
<i>Less than \$35,000</i>	9.9%	7.5%	9.1%
<i>\$35,000 - \$49,999</i>	5.8%	8.5%	6.7%
<i>\$50,000 - \$99,000</i>	26.6%	15.8%	23.1%
<i>\$100,000 - \$199,999</i>	29.1%	21.1%	26.5%
<i>\$200,000 - \$299,999</i>	10.7%	13.2%	11.5%
<i>\$300,000 - \$499,000</i>	10.2%	10.1%	10.2%
<i>\$500,000+</i>	7.7%	23.8%	13.0%

APPENDIX F: ATTENDEE OCCUPATION

	UTAH	NON-UTAH	TOTAL
<i>Entertainment Industry</i>	5.2%	25.4%	11.8%
<i>Non-Entertainment Industry</i>	47.8%	35.7%	43.8%
<i>Press</i>	1.5%	1.7%	1.5%
<i>Student</i>	6.8%	4.5%	6.0%
<i>Other</i>	18.7%	12.1%	16.6%

APPENDIX G: ATTENDEE INTENDED TO SKI OR SNOWBOARD DURING FESTIVAL

	UTAH	NON-UTAH	COMBINED
<i>Yes</i>	22.8%	26.2%	23.9%
<i>No</i>	77.2%	73.8%	76.1%

APPENDIX H: COUNTY OF RESIDENCE (UTAH)

	UTAH
<i>Salt Lake</i>	55.1%
<i>Summit</i>	20.6%
<i>Utah</i>	8.6%
<i>Wasatch</i>	5.4%
<i>Davis</i>	3.8%
<i>Weber</i>	3.4%
<i>Other</i>	3.0%

APPENDIX I: MOST ATTENDED VENUE

	UTAH	NON-UTAH	TOTAL
<i>Park City</i>	53.9%	90.5%	65.9%
<i>Salt Lake City</i>	44.6%	8.8%	32.9%
<i>Sundance Resort</i>	1.5%	0.7%	1.2%

APPENDIX J: EVER ATTENDED SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL BEFORE

	UTAH	NON-UTAH	TOTAL
<i>Yes</i>	73.0%	68.4%	71.5%
<i>No</i>	27.0%	31.6%	28.5%

APPENDIX K: PLANNING TO RETURN AND ATTEND FILM FESTIVAL NEXT YEAR

	Utah	Non-Utah	Combined
<i>Yes, Definitely</i>	64.3%	41.6%	56.8%
<i>Yes, Probably</i>	30.3%	38.5%	33.0%
<i>No, Probably not</i>	5.4%	18.9%	9.8%
<i>No, Definitely not</i>	0.1%	1.0%	0.4%

APPENDIX L: STATE OF RESIDENCE (NON-UTAH)

	NON-UTAH
<i>California</i>	34.3%
<i>New York</i>	9.8%
<i>Texas</i>	7.1%
<i>Illinois</i>	5.1%
<i>Florida</i>	4.2%
<i>Virginia</i>	3.1%
<i>Washington</i>	3.0%
<i>Pennsylvania</i>	2.9%
<i>Colorado</i>	2.8%
<i>New Jersey</i>	2.6%
<i>Other</i>	25.2%

APPENDIX M: COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE (NON-US)

	NON-UTAH
<i>Canada</i>	21.6%
<i>Australia</i>	10.8%
<i>Germany</i>	10.8%
<i>United Kingdom</i>	10.8%
<i>India</i>	5.4%
<i>Antigua & Baruba</i>	2.7%
<i>Argentina</i>	2.7%
<i>Chile</i>	2.7%

<i>Denmark</i>	2.7%
<i>Ecuador</i>	2.7%
<i>France</i>	2.7%
<i>Japan</i>	2.7%
<i>Mexico</i>	2.7%
<i>New Zealand</i>	2.7%
<i>Norway</i>	2.7%
<i>Panama</i>	2.7%
<i>Peru</i>	2.7%
<i>South Korea</i>	2.7%
<i>Switzerland</i>	2.7%
<i>United Arab Emirates</i>	2.7%

APPENDIX N: FESTIVAL DAYS ATTENDED

	Utah	Non-Utah	Combined
<i>1</i>	41.1%	10.8%	31.2%
<i>2</i>	41.1%	12.4%	31.7%
<i>3</i>	3.8%	13.1%	6.8%
<i>4</i>	3.0%	16.1%	7.3%
<i>5</i>	3.2%	18.9%	8.4%
<i>6</i>	2.5%	12.3%	5.7%
<i>7</i>	0.6%	6.1%	2.4%
<i>8</i>	1.7%	2.5%	2.0%
<i>9</i>	0.8%	2.0%	1.2%
<i>10</i>	1.2%	2.5%	1.6%
<i>11</i>	1.0%	3.2%	1.7%
<i>Average</i>	2.28	4.50	3.01

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

QUIN MONSON, Ph.D., Y² Analytics

Quin Monson is a recognized survey researcher and a founding partner at Y² Analytics. He has particular expertise with questionnaire design; survey and field experiments; and survey sampling and weighting. He has done pioneering work with creating online probability panels and has fielded many political, academic, and professional surveys via telephone, online, in-person interviews, and using mixed methods. Quin received his Ph.D. from the Ohio State University where he focused on elections, public opinion, and survey research methods. In addition to his work at Y², he is the current Director of Civic Engagement Leadership, the former Director of the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy and a professor of political science, all at Brigham Young University.

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Sven E. Wilson is an economist with over 25 years of experience doing empirical analysis in the areas of economics, public policy and demographics. He is a founding Partner of Notalys, a Utah-based economic and public policy consulting firm that has done numerous policy analyses in the state of Utah in recent years. He is a graduate of Brigham Young University and holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Chicago. He is professor of public policy at BYU, where he has taught policy research and data analysis, and he is a research economist at the National Bureau of Economic Research.

JAY GOODLIFFE, Ph.D., Notalys Chief Methodologist

Jay Goodliffe is a founding Partner and Chief Methodologist at Notalys. Dr. Goodliffe has taught and researched public policy in Utah and nationally for over 25 years. He received his bachelor's degree from MIT, and his master's degree and Ph.D. from the University of Rochester. His experience includes designing, administering, and analyzing complex survey data; assessing incentive and information systems in market and non-market environments; compiling and synthesizing disparate databases to identify patterns and relationships; and conducting cost-benefit analyses. As professor of political science at BYU, Dr. Goodliffe teaches classes on statistical analysis, econometrics, multilevel models, game theory, and data visualization.